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31 MAR 1980

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Richard C. Atkinson, Director
National Science Foundation
Washington, D. C. 20550

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

This is in response to your letter of January 22, 1980, in which you proposed that the National Science Foundation, in cooperation with the Department of Justice, arrange for the National Academy of Sciences to undertake further evaluation of acoustical evidence related to the John F. Kennedy assassination investigation. In particular, you recommended the assembly of an independent scientific panel to review acoustical analysis results which are already available, recommend further study, arrange private sector experimentation, and evaluate the results derived from such private sector analysis. This panel, operating as a Committee of the National Academy of Sciences, would conclude its mission by issuing an independent technical report to the public.

I fully concur with your observation that the National Academy of Sciences offers the independence, prestige, and expertise essential to the performance of this vital project. I eagerly accept your offer to initiate National Academy of Sciences' involvement in the evaluation of the acoustical evidence in this matter. I propose that exclusive control of this facet of the review of the J.F.K. assassination be vested in the National Science Foundation. Accordingly, the Department of Justice will be available to render any assistance requested but preferably will not become involved in either supervising the research or in defining the scope of such scientific experimentation.

Records
Gen. Litigation
Fogel (2)
Cubbage (1)
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I envision that we may be able to assist the National Academy of Sciences by supplying materials and information which are now in the possession of the Department of Justice. The actual Dallas Police dictabelt containing those transmissions which were the subject of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (HSCA) review remains in the possession of the Department and is available for use as required. The Department has received, from various executive branch agencies, recommendations regarding several research facilities which may have expertise in acoustical research. The names of those facilities are available for NSF use. I expect completion of an FBI review of the HSCA-commissioned analysis of the Dallas Police dictabelt within the next three months. Although the FBI is performing the limited task of evaluating the validity of the research methodology employed by the HSCA experts, and is not endeavoring to analyze the tapes, the results of its examination will be made available to the National Science Foundation upon completion of that examination.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you or members of your staff to further discuss the potential role of the National Science Foundation in the Department's current inquiry. I have requested Mr. Roger Cubbage, an attorney on my staff, to contact your office to arrange a meeting at a time and place convenient for you. Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. KEUCH
Special Counsel to the
Attorney General